



## **SUMMARY**

### **LSTA Early Learning with Families Conference Call**

Friday, July 21, 2006      10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

#### **Introductions**

#### **Overview of ELF Guidelines and Application**

Early Learning with Families @ Your Library (ELF) is a California State Library initiative that is focused on serving families with children from birth to five years of age. Research has shown how critical a role parents and caretakers play in supporting a child's development during these early months and years. Therefore an essential component of ELF is the inclusion of parents and caretakers in this early learning initiative as their children learn and grow.

Applicants need to consider the values and philosophy statements and incorporate their understanding of these in their responses on the application. Participants will be selected based on the criteria outline below. Applicants will need to show evidence of their capacity to undertake this endeavor this year as well as provide evidence of a partnership between Children's and Literacy Services. In addition, the range of families that the library plans to serve and the capacity to reach them will influence eligibility.

Each applicant should plan to commit a team of three staff members including one administrative representative who will attend one of the three training sessions. During the training, each library team will develop an implementation plan and budget that will be submitted for determination of the mini-grant allocation and implemented during the subsequent months of the project.

#### **Answers to Frequently Asked Questions:**

##### **1) What are the application selection criteria?**

The following criteria will be used to review applications and select libraries for participation in the first year of this ELF initiative:

- Libraries that are "new" to the concepts of early learning
- Evidence of community need
- Capacity of library to undertake ELF
- Evidence of Children's and Literacy services partnership
- Evidence of capacity for community collaborations
- Representation of a diverse cross section – libraries that are geographically diverse and/or varying types of libraries
- Ability to reach hard to reach families

## **2) What is the role of literacy services?**

In initial conversations with the field, library literacy services have provided valuable input in helping shape the ELF initiative. What has evolved, however, has become broader than what was initially conceived. The ELF initiative is an early learning program with a focus on families with children from infancy to five years of age, delivered through libraries' children and youth services area. It will include literacy aspects but it is not a specific literacy service nor is it intended to replace existing literacy services.

We anticipate that as a result of the collaboration between literacy and children's services both will benefit. Some ways in which this may occur are:

- Ensuring that knowledge and experience in working with families and children is shared across professions,
- Sharing effective ways to communicate with adults, particularly those who have limited literacy,
- Targeting families to be served and identifying ways to reach those who are not typically library or literacy users,
- Identifying community agencies with whom to partner in delivering family services,
- Developing methods for effective community outreach,
- Communicating information about and the development of family resources, collections and materials for use by both services, and
- Ensuring that information about each service, their activities and programs, are shared and promoted among their respective patrons.

## **3) What constitutes being "new" to early learning concepts?**

Libraries that are new to early learning concepts will benefit most from participating in the first year of the ELF Initiative. Some characteristics of libraries "new" to early learning are those in which:

- Children's programming for 0-5 year-olds is not offered or offered on a limited basis,
- Programming that is offered involves only children without their parents,
- Programming is targeted to older preschool children ages 4-5 rather than infants and toddlers,
- Parent/caretaker workshops or educational programs are not offered,
- Only parent workshops and educational programs are offered with no complimentary children's programming, and
- Library staff has not been trained in child development or recent brain development research, PLA: Every Child Ready to Read, Family Place, Baby Talk, or Raising a Reader .
- Current children's programming is not family focused or based on child development and recent brain development research, however the library plans on incorporating a program that is based on this research and family-centered early learning concepts.

## **4) How will funding amounts be determined?**

Funding amounts will be based on the implementation plan each library develops as a part of the training. Average awards will be up to \$5,000 but will vary based on scope of plan and size of population to be reached.

## **5) Can funds be used for staffing?**

In general, small LSTA grants like this are not intended to provide on-going staffing. A portion of these funds, however, can be used to provide back-fill for substitute or temporary staffing.

**6) If we don't apply, can our library benefit from the ELF initiative?**

Libraries that do not apply can still benefit from the ELF initiative. There will be a website developed as well as a listserv through which training materials, various resources, bibliographies, templates, marketing materials, programming innovations and lessons from the field will be posted and accessible to all California libraries. In addition, ELF workshop sessions are scheduled for the CLA conference in November and the October Cal Lit conference.

**Specific Questions from Callers**

**A. Can a library that doesn't have library literacy services apply for ELF?**

Yes. Where no library literacy services exist, applicant libraries are encouraged to identify and work with a community literacy agency, if at all possible.

**B. Are there alternatives to having 3 representatives from one library attending the training, if it may be burdensome?**

The North Bay Cooperative Library's LSTA oversight grant will cover costs associated with getting staff to the trainings, including some backfill for those libraries in which releasing staff to attend the training would be problematic. Because much of the training is envisioned as a hands-on, plan development process, however, it will be important to have the collaborative partners (Children's and Literacy Services) who will be implementing the proposed plan attend the training together. We also strongly encourage Library Director or a decision-making representative to attend the entire 2-day training. However, when that's not feasible, the Director or representative may attend the last half of the last day during for that portion of the training during which individual library implementation plans will be crafted. In this way, we hope to ensure that implementation plans are collaboratively developed and capable of implementation. Without an administrative decision-making representative actively involved, implementation plans could be devised (although compelling) that would not be feasible, given other library priorities.

**C. If we are planning on implementing a family based early learning program (Family Place, Mother Goose on the Loose), is it appropriate for us to apply?**

It is appropriate for you to apply if your current children's services are not family focused or based on child development and recent brain development research. The intent of this first year of ELF, is to support the implementation of family-centered, research based early learning concepts through Children's services in libraries new to these concepts. Libraries that plan on implementing programming (such as Family Place, Mother Goose on the Loose, PLA Every Child Ready to Read, etc.) that reflects this research and family-centered approach are encouraged to apply for ELF funding.

**D. Are ELF monies awarded to a system or each individual library?**

Monies will be awarded per applicant, with the understanding that one application per library site and no more than two applications per single library jurisdiction may be submitted. The intent is to fund pilot efforts within a jurisdiction that can eventually serve as models for replication throughout a jurisdiction.

Any library selected for participation in the training will be funded based on the implementation plan (up to approximately \$ 5,000) developed at the training. Awards will vary based on scope and size of plan. Keep in mind, for this first year in particular, we are striving to encourage smaller, pilot undertakings that can eventually be expanded across multiple branches or systems.

**E. If a library plans on changing the physical space of their children's area, can they use ELF funds for these changes?**

Yes, so long as the expenses are related to non-construction costs. Physical space changes are eligible for funding. In fact, reassessing physical space and how it is used for families and young children is a component of ELF. Any changes made, however, need to directly correlate to a specifically identified goal that you wish to achieve by the end of this first year.

**F. Can we use ELF monies for backfill needed to send staff to subsequent and specific model trainings (e.g. Mother Goose on the Loose training)?**

Possibly. Much will depend upon the implementation plan that you craft. We understand the potential need for subsequent training but the primary intent of this ELF initiative is to help libraries translate training and research into practical application so additional trainings would need to directly correlate and help achieve your identified first year goal.

**G. Is it correct to begin formulating a plan for what we would like to do to transform children's services, leaving the details to be decided during the ELF training?**

Absolutely. Through the training, we hope to help you combine your good ideas with best practices, child development principals, and practices from the field to enrich your ultimate vision and plan for your library.

**H. If we provide some early learning services, how will we know whether we should apply to participate in the ELF initiative?**

If the services that you are currently providing have manifested the ELF values in concrete and demonstrable ways, your library would most likely not benefit from the ELF training and would not need to apply. We would however encourage you to stay connected to the ELF initiative through the list serve and website so that we can continue to learn from your experiences and so that you can be aware of resources and community partnerships that you may wish to avail yourself of as well as helping us to identify needs and priorities for subsequent years.

**I. What public libraries in California have ELF models in place?**

Are you asking about program models that have been designed for libraries or how such models have been implemented in California libraries? At the moment, there is a wide range and variety of early learning programs being offered by about 26 libraries that responded to our survey. They offer either replicas, adaptations or combinations of model programs like PLA Every Child Ready to Read, Family Place, Baby Talk, Mother Goose, Raising a Reader, STAR, Books for Little Hands, etc. Fourteen of these programs are represented on the ELF Advisory Committee and will be participating in the training sessions as well as providing input on development of ELF programs and resources. We will be happy to share this information with the field once we have met with the Advisory Committee, explored their family-centered approaches and have focused information on their early learning family-centered services. This will enable us to steer questions and areas of interest to the appropriate libraries.

**J. Will there be ELF funding in the future?**

This is intended to be a multi-year initiative depending, of course, on future Federal LSTA funding levels.

**K. What are the requirements for accountability?**

Because this first year will allow for only about 6 months of actual implementation, no specific user outcomes can be captured or expected. However, as a part of each library's implementation plan, an identifiable goal and quantifiable measure of its achievement will need to be determined. We hope to work with you to identify data already being collected that could be utilized for this purpose, whenever feasible. LSTA narrative and financial reports will need to be filed but only one mid-year and one final. We will also be working with Rhea Rubin to begin crafting an outcomes measurement tool that any ELF library could eventually use to help monitor ELF impact in subsequent years.

**L. If a library does not apply in this first year, will they be eligible to apply in future years?**

Yes. In fact, because this is envisioned as a multi-year endeavor, libraries for which applying this year is not feasible or that are not selected for this first year, will be encouraged to apply in subsequent years.

**M. Is it correct to assume that emphasis is on ELF programming delivered at the library rather than programming delivered out in the community?**

To a degree. For this first year, the intent of the ELF initiative is to focus on how families with young children experience the library and how enhancing this experience may increase library usage. That does not mean, however, that we want to discourage programming delivered out in the community, especially

when that's the most appropriate delivery mechanism. We also want to ensure that such community programming connects back to and effectively promotes the library.

**N. Can ELF funds be used to support a needs assessment?**

No. Your needs assessment is a part of your application (Question # 7) and must be undertaken prior to the training and award of funds. However, your needs assessment can be a fairly straightforward undertaking that simply requires consulting current census data for your area as well as a brief review of what other service agencies in your community are or are not offering to families and young children.

**O. How long will it take after applications are submitted to receive notification of acceptance status? Award status?**

We have a very short turn around time in which to review the applications and select the participants but we will do our best to notify all applicants regarding your acceptance status by mid-September

**P. Where will the training sessions be held? Can we select the training location in which we prefer to participate?**

The training dates have been changed slightly and are now as follows:

- October 23-24, Southern California
- November 1-2, Sacramento
- December 6-7, Southern California

Exact locations and training venues have yet to be confirmed. Because the majority of "Interest in Applying" forms were from Southern California libraries, we are planning to hold two of the trainings in Southern California. We will assign you to the training location nearest your library. If, however, the assigned training date is problematic, we will, of course, work with you to reassign you to another training. Because the training is designed to be hands-on and we want to give each of you as much individual attention as possible, we do have a limit to how many individuals can attend any particular training. We will, therefore, need to work with you on any training re-assignment and we appreciate your flexibility in this regard.

**Q. In answering Question # 6 on the application, "How many people will be directly served as clients by this project?" do you want the potential number or the anticipated actual number of people to be served?**

We encourage you to identify the total potential number of people who could eventually be served by this initiative in your response to Question # 6. However, we also encourage you to identify what percentage of the potential audience you hope to target in this first year in your response to Question #10.

**Wrap Up**

Please keep in mind this first year is very much a work in progress. It is the beginning of a journey to develop and design, in collaboration with you, this early learning initiative for California families. We are excited by this opportunity to work with you and are delighted to have so many libraries interested in this initiative.

**Contacts**

We are also very happy to talk with you individually regarding your specific circumstances and/or questions. For more information, you can contact:

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